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Church Union in Canada
AFTER THREE YEARS

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To My Wife

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FOREWORD

This essay is not a history of Church Union in Canada. It is rather an attempt to show that the movement toward Union was a normal and natural outgrowth of the spirit of neighborhood, conspicuous in the lives of pioneer settlers, and descended to us from them.

My thanks are due to Dr. W. T. Gunn, Dr. George C. Pidgeon, Dr. P. M. Macdonald, and Mr. G. W. Mason, K.C., who have kindly read the manuscript, and especially to Dr. Lorne Pierce, for many helpful suggestions.

R. J. W.

PREFATORY

"We greet one another cordially as brethren, and we meet in Committees and on platforms, and in various other ways. . . . We have various ways of expressing the unity that remains to us across the divided lines of our Churches. Ah, but there was a time, gone by long, long ago, when all those, who in any place confessed a common Lord, exercised their unity around the same common table, and in the courts which Christ had set up, and not in such Committees and Alliances as we have been compelled to plan because we have fallen from the others. . . . There was a time when, if anything fell out to break that unity, men were grieved and humbled, and Apostles wrote moving letters to the Churches concerned, to entreat them to be visibly one in the institutions and ordinances which Christ gave them to express, and to exercise their unity. . . . There was something they had, in the early Church, when they met around the same common table, and in the same institutions just as naturally as they went to one martyr-death together—there was something then, which we have not now. Therefore we are bound to aim at it—we are bound to seek it as we can."[1]

[1]From a speech by Principal Rainey, in *Life of Principal Rainey.* P. Carnegie Simpson. Vol. I, p. 168.

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I.—INTRODUCTION

The task of reclaiming this country from forest to garden, of planting the soil with seed, of rearing homes and villages and cities where once the denizens of the forest had their haunts, of turning the prairie from the undisputed territory of aboriginal tribes into the bread-basket of the world, represents but a hundred and fifty years of British occupation in the making of the Canadian nation. During these years the scattered provinces have been welded into a Dominion. The battles for free institutions, free learning, free churches, responsible and representative government, and the right to determine her own economic and political destiny, have all been won. The soul of a nation has been born and Canada, in the second quarter of the twentieth century, enters upon full partnership in the Empire, a nation among the nations that form the British Commonwealth. The Churches, too, in Canada, have widened their outlook with the country, and with the years. The United Church of Canada is the product of the older Churches' religious experience articulating itself in terms of a common basis of doctrine, and girding itself for the task of meeting the religious needs of a nation.

Indigenous to the Soil

A Church may be said to be indigenous to the soil when its interpretation of Christ, as well as its expression in worship and service, incorporate the worthy characteristics of the people, while fully conserving at the same time the heritage of the Church in all lands and in all ages. Through such a Church, the spirit of Christianity penetrates the various phases of the people's life, seeking to bring to Christ's service the potentialities of both men and women. The indigenous Church actively shares its resources with the common life of the nation;

it is alert to the problems of the time, and as a spiritual force in the community makes its unique contribution to their solution.

In addition to this the Church is kindled with the spirit of missionary enterprise, thrusting out its bravest and best as the heralds of the Cross, even to the uttermost parts of the earth. The indigenous Church, therefore, is at once national and international. In such a Church the Christian religion will not be debased to small provincialism, or narrow parochialism; rather will it aim at making the nation's life rich and strong, strive to replace racial fear by mutual sympathy and mutual responsibility, believing and teaching that love can overcome hate, good will triumph over prejudices, and perpersonal contact obviate misunderstandings. Social agencies will be worked out, whereby the diverse races of the country shall come into possession of the methods and the means necessary to live under the new conditions which obtain for them in a new land.[1]

The amazing adequacy of the Gospel of Jesus Christ presents this challenge to The United Church of Canada. The Christian Church of the first centuries captured the defences of the unknown Gentile world. Nothing less than a Christian Canada is a worthy ideal for the Church of the twentieth century. The religion of the indigenous Church cannot be merely the religion of the white man of northern Europe, much less of the middle class of whites; it must in itself be intrinsically valuable. It must be universalized in its heart and centre until it is worthy of world expansion. For such a religion, *things* can never be more valuable than *personalities,* neither can the machinery of life be made the master of men. This religion cannot be treated as a thing, privately vital, but publicly indifferent, nor can it ever be a decorous display of triumphant materialism. Resounding principles are not compatible with sordid practices. Therefore, the Church will seek not only to Christianize the individual, but also, at the same time, to make a

[1]For an interesting discussion of the Indigenous Church in Mission Lands, see Vol. III, *Jerusalem Meeting I.M.C.* 1928.

Christian civilization. Bishop Berkeley said, long ago: "Whatever the world thinks, he who hath not much meditated upon God, the human mind and the *summum bonum* may possibly make a thriving earthworm, but will most undoubtedly make a sorry patriot, and a sorry statesman."[1]

II.—RETROSPECT

In a new country the task of religious leadership, like that of political unity, is essentially the problem of the pioneer settler. The immigrant enters a new land in the expectation of bettering his own conditions, and providing a larger and worthier outlook for his children. The first settlers are usually willing, when necessary, to endure hardship, if succeeding generations are thereby guaranteed those privileges of education, social culture and economic independence which were denied their fathers. The pioneers of Canada, three generations ago were willing to live courageously, in order that the blessings of free institutions might be enjoyed by their posterity.

The history of the Dominion of Canada illustrates impressively the evolution of four great underlying principles in our national life. In the state there is responsible government. In education our democracy ensures the right of every Canadian child to share in all the privileges of learning. The events which secured these rights to us also guaranteed freedom in matters of belief, and equal civil rights for all the Churches of the country. The fourth principle emerged with the attainment by our great religious bodies of independence from outside control. While preserving the heritage of the parent Churches, and of the Church universal, the great Churches of Canada, without exception, severed the bonds which symbolized foreign management. While autonomous and independent Churches thereafter, and not mere colonial missions, they were never divorced from the great streams of religious life from which they took their rise. Fellow-

[1]Berkeley, *Siris*, p. 350.

ship, gratitude and a measure of voluntary co-operation have ever marked the Canadian Churches in their relation to their mother Churches.

Behind these bed-rock principles of Canadian life there lies a story of long-drawn agitation and struggle. Not one of these great foundation-stones was easily laid, and on every one of them there are the red marks of courage and sacrifice. There never was actually an Established Church in Canada, but early in the life of this country all the machinery of government, in both the Canadas and the Maritimes, was set to bring about those distinctions of class privilege in education, in social preferment and in religion, which mark the worst features of the English Feudal System, and the Established Church in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The names of McCulloch in the Maritime Provinces and Egerton Ryerson in Upper Canada are indissolubly linked with the reforms securing religious freedom.

It is not unlikely that the pressure of pioneer life had more to do with these achievements than any other single feature. The life of the early settlers, a hundred years ago, was not greatly dissimilar from life in the newer areas of Canada to-day. There is the same struggle for existence, the early years of unremitting toil, the life of drudgery and of grinding poverty, the same dependence on the soil for a harvest that is not always in proportion to the labor spent on it, the simple pleasures, the intimate and character-producing family life, the constant demand for neighborliness, and the same hunger for the beneficent though unseen God.

The following description given by Dr. John Carroll of pioneer life a century ago, might, with few emendations, be duplicated in a hundred settlements in Canada to-day:

"Moral restraints are feeble among them (the pioneers), conventional restraints are few—the freedom of their simple wilderness life characterizes all their habits, they have their own code of decorum, and sometimes of law itself. They are frank, hospitable, violent in preju-

dice and passion, fond of disputation, of excitement and of hearty, if not reckless amusements."[1]

But the pioneer of to-day has a much richer heritage in Canadian institutions, with which to begin, than his predecessor had. This generation can never be too grateful for the political and religious freedom bequeathed to it by the pioneers of the last century.

As in the Church so in the state, the care of the frontiers of the country, and the gradual evolution of responsible government literally drove the separated provinces of Canada toward common recognition and political unity. From 1858, when Alexander T. Galt first advocated the Confederation of all the British North American Provinces, to the birth of the Dominion of Canada, in 1867, the movement in all the Provinces was pushed forward by the situation created by the frontier. The deadlock in the Legislative Assembly, the abrogation of the Reciprocity Treaty by the United States, the intimation from the British Government that Canada, to a large extent, must look to her own defence, were all major factors in bringing about the passing of the British North America Act (1867). The demands for protection, expansion and political solidarity, brought to fulfilment the expanding ideal of a United Dominion of Canada within the British Empire, equal rights, with free institutions and responsible government. The Fathers of Confederation builded better than they knew.

The remarkable success of the unity of the Dominion could not fail to impress those Churches whose people had so largely contributed to its realization. The ideal of a growing spiritual unity received due weight from the Churches, who ever looked beyond the margin of self-interest and safety to those fringes of settlement where Christ must also be preached.

The problem of providing ordinances for the newer settlements pressed heavily on all the Churches of Canada from the earliest days. This pressure, always a chal-

[1]*Case and His Contemporaries.* Vol. I, p. 93. By John Carroll, quoted by Carroll from the Biographer of Nathan Bangs.

lenge to the Church's strength and ability, was periodically increased by immigration. The United Empire Loyalist invasion of the last quarter of the eighteenth century, then the early thirties of the nineteenth century, again the sixties and seventies of the same century, and the unprecedented influx of immigrants during the first twelve years of the twentieth century, made demands upon the Churches of Canada far beyond their separate resources to meet. It was the Church's challenge—it was also the Church's despair.

To add to their distress, at the very beginning of their life in Canada, disunion had been imposed upon the colonial Churches from abroad. Loyalty to the mother Churches in Scotland demanded loyalty from Presbyterians in the new world, where the divisive issues at home did not, in any real sense, obtain. The struggle of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in England, and of the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States, for control of the Canadian Methodist Churches, and the determination of Canadian Methodists to be free from both, is a story extending over sixty years of Canadian religious life. The mutual suspicion of Old Country Independents and United States Congregationalists is also reminiscent of the scandal of division.

With the complete freedom of the colonial Churches from outside control, a better day began to dawn, and with that day came the prophecies of unions and still further unions. First the Presbyterian Churches, after a series of smaller unions, became a National Presbyterian Church in 1875. Nine years later (1884), the Methodist bodies of Canada, following the initial Union of 1874, consolidated into the Methodist Church (Canada).

In some regards the Congregational Churches of Canada, and especially of Upper Canada, were even in advance of the other bodies in seeking a union, which would embrace, if not all the Evangelical bodies of Christians, at least all who were willing to consider union.

There was a time when the denominations, in their relations to one another, were antagonistic and intolerant. Each was hopeful of a time when their particular witness to truth would become universal, and opposed the others as incompetent to proclaim the truth in all its fullness. Intolerance was succeeded by isolation, isolation by appreciation, which in turn gave way to the beginnings of comity, thought by many good churchmen to be the last word in Christian tolerance.[1] In Canada, comity passed to co-operation and co-operation into a greater desire for visible union.

The Breakdown of Exclusiveness

The spirit of exclusiveness of the separated Churches gradually broke down under the insistence of neighborliness, and the exigencies of great needs. Many things contributed. The corner grocery with the post office attached, the community centre of the back concessions, where the neighbors congregated around the stove, perched on counters, soap boxes and biscuit barrels, was a factor in turning the wilderness into a neighborhood. It was the schoolhouse of patriotism and morals, for the churchmen of the early days were zealous patriots and law-abiding citizens. If, in such environment, religion was threatened with absorption by a self-conscious civilization, that civilization itself was saved from absolute collapse and bankruptcy by the qualifying influences of the Christian faith.

The Bible Society, with its general appeal, was another factor in uniting the Christian community. Later the Y.M.C.A., with its nonsectarian appeal on behalf of young men, did much to bring Christian men of all the Churches into knowledgable sympathy and an enthusiasm for united service. Within the colleges and universities students for the ministry of the separated Churches, mingling with one another, and with other students pursuing similar courses of university studies, gained the comradeship which university life supplies.

[1]Adapted from a pamphlet on *Church Unity*, by John M. Moore, D.D., Secretary Federal Council of Churches of America.

The common fellowship of these students in aggressive Christian effort on behalf of other students, fostered mutual respect. Their very difficulties made them dissatisfied with denominational barriers.

About the middle of the last century, in both Upper and Lower Canada, non-sectarian organizations were formed to foster the principles and habits of temperance. Their membership was largely recruited from the various Churches, and here again the leaven of common experience and a common objective brought together individuals of various denominations, who learned to work together harmoniously in a common cause. Christian Endeavor conventions likewise united youth in a young people's crusade. The Lord's Day Alliance commanded the allegiance of all lovers of a Christian Sabbath, quite regardless of denomination. The interdenominational and international week of prayer brought Christians together in a ministry of common intercession.

Another factor which led to fraternal exchanges of good will and mutual co-operation was the International Sunday-school Convention. This was supplemented by an infinite number and variety of provincial, county and township associations, where the most earnest of the Sunday-school teachers of various denominations met regularly for instruction and inspiration. Doubtless better methods have followed the efforts of these Sunday-school pioneers, but fine fellowships were developed in those days, which have stood the test of the years, and, among the laity of the country, few things were more effective in bringing about a better understanding among Christian citizens, who were separated only in worship and upon the Sabbath Day. Within the Churches exchange delegations of good will at annual Synods, Conferences and Assemblies became general toward the close of the last century, and rarely did the speakers fail to deplore the wasteful divisions of Protestant Christianity. Not infrequently, a prophetic hope was voiced, that Christians of like mind concerning the great essentials of the faith should be able some day, somehow, to find

themselves in a common Church, with a common experience and with a common task. These things had weight in preparing the minds of the people for leadership in unity. Such non-religious organizations as the Patrons of Industry, and labor unions were working also toward the breaking down of the barriers of isolation and separation.

But above all other co-ordinating movements was the pressure of the Home Mission field, and its appalling need for men and money. The wastefulness of Churches carrying on competitive centres of worship in small places, while settlers in areas a hundred miles square were without Gospel ordinances, offered a shameful spectacle, and yet the Churches were without adequate men to send, or money to support them.

Home Mission Co-operation

To the mind of the Church leaders of Canada, at the opening of the twentieth century, Christianity called for a great adventure. In front of them was a Cross to tell them that to play for one's own hand, in esoteric aggrandisement, meant, for Churches, as well as for individuals, nothing short of death and damnation. Into the psychology of those Churches which constitute The United Church there entered a little less of the shareholder and dividend idea, and somewhat more of the investment of self. Thus, proposals of the Home Mission Boards for co-operation were unanimously sanctioned by the chief governing bodies of the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches, in 1899. At first it was little more than a gesture of good will, but the logic of events drove the Churches through all the phases of delimitation of territory, of co-operative congregations affiliated with one, or both, or all churches, and of local union churches and united community churches, which would not wait for the slow and deliberate movements of Union Committees and Church Courts. The co-operative movements between the Churches assumed such proportions that, in 1924, there were in co-operation of one sort or another, more than thirty-one hundred places of worship, out of a total of some nine thousand in the three uniting Churches. In

the serene, generous and ample climate of good will, these Churches learned through a period of twenty years of co-operation, that, in the realm of moral and spiritual life, there is no insoluble problem, no impossible task, no insuperable difficulty.

The new nationalism of the twentieth century was in line with the expanding religious thought of Canada. This fraternal nationalism points to the duty laid upon every nation of getting above mere provincial standards, and rising in every department of life and thought to the height of nationhood. The nation must be microcosmical, a world among worlds. National enterprise, courage and solidarity have been the watchwords of the new movement. "The idea of democracy," says Bishop Westcott, "is not, if we look below the surface, so much a form of government as a confession of human brotherhood. It is the equal recognition of mutual obligations. It is the confession of common duties, common aims, common responsibilities. Each in his proper sphere—workman, capitalist, teacher, preacher—is equally a servant of the state, feeding in his measure the common life by which he lives. That work is not measured, but made possible, by the wages rendered to the doer. If we willingly offer to our country what we have, we shall in turn share in the rich fullness of the life of all."

III.—THE UNION OF THE CHURCHES

Preliminary Considerations:

When the governing bodies of the Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational Churches of Canada undertook seriously to explore the possibilities of Organic Union, it was a confession that, if desirable and feasible, such a Union was in line with the oft-quoted prayer of our Lord for the unity of believers in Him. It was, in fact, an agreement that, unless there was sufficient spiritual reason for Churches remaining apart, it was their duty to unite.

Approach was made to the Baptist Church with a view to having them also join negotiations. The Baptist

reply was courteous, though negative. After setting forth the distinctive principles of their Church they considered it "necessary to maintain a separate organized existence," and to propagate their views throughout the world. Similar fate met the approach to the Anglican Church, but from a different angle. The very gracious reply of the Bishops of the Church of England referred to the Lambeth Quadrilateral as the required basis of negotiation for any Union. The interpretation put upon this declaration in 1908 has since undergone considerable modification, but at that time it offered no ground of hope even for Conference.

The first meetings of the Union Committees of the various Churches were concerned with general considerations. The representatives of each Church met separately, then jointly, then separately again, to prepare findings for their own bodies. Sub-Committees on Doctrine, Polity, Government and Legislation, met jointly and separately at stated periods extending over five years. The results of these deliberations were canvassed from time to time by the full committees, jointly and separately. At length a *Basis of Union* was agreed upon, and submitted to the Churches in these terms: "This Joint Committee on Church Union, representing the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational Churches, in closing their fifth Conference, desire to acknowledge, with humble gratitude, the goodness of God manifested in all their meetings.

"In the brotherly spirit of their deliberations, in the harmony of their decisions, in the solution of many difficulties presented to them, they recognize the guidance of the Divine Spirit, and they submit the results of their conference to the Churches represented by them.

"They believe that the conclusions to which they have been led in regard to the important interest considered by them show that the organic union of the negotiating Churches is practicable. They assume that ample opportunity will be given, not only to the courts, but also to the general membership of the various Churches, to consider the results of their conferences, and they expect

that the more fully these are considered the more generally will they be improved.

"The Joint Committee would have been glad to welcome to their conference representatives of other communions, and, although this widening of the conference has not yet been found practicable, they hope that, in the event of a union of the negotiating Churches, a still more comprehensive union may in the future be realized.

"The Joint Committee regard their work as now substantially completed. They commit it to the Great Head of the Church for His blessing, and to those portions of His Church which they represent with confident hope of their approval.

" 'Let Thy work appear unto Thy servants and Thy glory unto their children. Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it.' "[1]

With minor changes this statement of faith ultimately became the *Basis of Union* of The United Church.

The Basis of Union

A cursory glance at this document will reveal the fact that The United Church of Canada links itself definitely and specifically with the Churches of Christ in every age. It acknowledges the great creeds of Christendom, and is essentially a New Testament, Evangelical, Trinitarian Church. The makers of this creed would draw a distinction between the essentials of a working creed, and the complete formulation with the attendant philosophical deductions, which constitutes a fuller statement of a Church's faith. The statement of doctrine strikes no uncertain sound on the faith commonly held among the three negotiating bodies, and will be found as a true successor to the decisions, on all essential points, which were deemed of importance by the Christian Church at the Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325). It is the product of

[1] *Basis of Union*—Historical Statement, p. 22. Edition 1924.

the common religious experience of the three Churches which now form The United Church.

In polity and government the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches in Canada had closely approximated one another throughout the years. Most of the independence upon which the Congregational Churches had insisted, and the principles which had called them into being, had been incorporated already in the practice of other Churches. While, in theory, the independence of the local church bulked large, in actual practice, the care of these churches one for another over a large and widely scattered area, made adhesion to associations and central advisory committees, with a large measure of authority, not only desirable, but, in Canada, necessary, if the Congregational Churches were to fulfil their task.

The polity of The United Church of Canada is Presbyterial; one supreme court, the General Council; eleven territorial Conferences, each comprising approximately three to four hundred ministers, and an equal number of representative laymen, elected from the Sessions and Official Boards of the local congregations, and exercising authority over the ministry in the matter of admission and discipline; below this there is the Presbytery, whose functions are to maintain oversight of the pastoral charges, form new pastoral charges or local churches, superintend the education of students looking forward to the ministry, license candidates to preach, induct and have oversight of ministers within its bounds. In the local congregation, the spiritual affairs are looked after by a Session (of which the minister is moderator), elected by and from the membership and ordained or set apart to office. The temporal affairs of the congregation are cared for by a Board of Stewards (Managers), and these joint Boards together with representatives of Sunday School, Young People's and Women's organizations, constitute the Official Board of the local charge.

The government of the Church is thus representative and democratic. It carries the ancient idea that the Church of Christ is not an inchoate mass, but an organized and disciplined body. The people, organized and articu-

lating themselves through their own chosen representatives, and ministered to by a regularly ordained clergy, are the Church. The Church is thus a brotherhood, a society, a fellowship, where all things are to be done "decently and in order."

A Forward Step

The basis had been prepared and sent down to the three negotiating Churches in 1910. In the Congregational Churches the documents were sent directly to the Churches for consideration. The returns showed an overwhelming vote in favor of Organic Union and the Congregational Union of Canada resolved, "that this Union considers the action it has already taken as sufficient," and at a subsequent meeting further resolved to await the action of the other Churches, "holding itself in readiness to take all necessary constitutional and legal steps when these should be called for."[1]

The Methodist Church at its General Conference, 1910, sent the documents to the District Meetings and Annual Conferences and subsequently to the membership of the Church "for consideration, adoption or rejection." The vote among both officials and members was more than six to one in favor of Church Union.[2]

In the Presbyterian Church in Canada two votes of the elders, officials and members were taken in 1910. Of the recorded votes in answer to the question, "Are you in favor of organic Union with the Methodist and Congregational Churches," the returns of the eldership and membership showed the Church as favoring Union by about five to two. The second vote was on the question, "Do you approve of the proposed Basis of Union," and the favorable vote was relatively slightly smaller.

Some amendments had been made to the proposed Basis of Union, and in 1915 the General Assembly sent the matter again to sessions and congregations in terms of the question: "Are you in favor of Union with the Methodist and Congregational Churches of Canada

[1] *Basis of Union.* Edition 1924, pp. 24, 25, 26.
[2] *Basis of Union.* Edition 1924, p. 24.

on the Basis approved by the General Assembly of 1915." The returns showed that fifty-three Presbyteries were favorable, thirteen unfavorable, three ties, two were irrelevant, one was rejected and four made no return. The elders were slightly less than two to one in favor of Union, and among members the vote for Union slightly more than three to two of the votes cast. It was obvious, therefore, that as far as the negotiating Churches had expressed their minds, all were decidedly in favor of a Union of the Churches.

Co-operation in Home Mission, Sunday School, Evangelistic and Social Service work was carried forward with unusual success. There was a substantial prudential reason. The pioneer settlements were calling loudly for help. The separate denominations were not raising sufficient money to extend the work in the newer settlements. Great areas in Western Canada were without church ordinances of any kind. Budgets showed a distinct falling off. Co-operating charges, forming local union churches, were impatient of delay. In 1916 already a number of churches had broken off from denominational control, and had formed a General Council of Union Churches. By 1924 their Annual Council had grown to almost a hundred, wholly in the Prairie Provinces. Their numbers would have been greatly augmented, if Union had been further delayed. The pressure during the Great War (1914-1918), increased the difficulties of Home Mission administration, both as to men and money.

In 1916 the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada decided overwhelmingly (the vote was 412-90), to go forward to the consummation of Union, and announced its decision to the other Churches. In 1917 the matter was again halted for four years, and explicit instructions issued, by a unanimous Assembly, to push the policy of co-operation not only in the Home Mission areas but also in Sunday-school work, Publications, Evangelism and Social Service, and in Theological Education. In 1921 the matter was again issued by the General Assembly in a decision to consummate Union "as expeditiously as possible."

This halting of the movement, from time to time, was due to opposition from a section of the Presbyterian Church. Until 1912 this opposition had been, for the most part, academic; from 1912 to 1916 it had been carried on by a very small body of men, chiefly by means of literature. After 1916 it became an organized opposition which, by 1922, had become an association fully officered, organized and heavily financed, and with a fairly complete organization in every province of the Dominion. A women's association was formed. Literature adverse to Union and filled with gloomy and unwarranted forebodings, was freely circulated. The courts of the Church were defied, almost every tenet of Presbyterian Church government was thrown to the winds, while the greatness, glory, persistence and final victory of the Presbyterian Church were loudly proclaimed. The Church was warned that under no conceivable circumstances would this section of the Presbyterian Church enter this or any other kind of Union. Union in general was declared to be undesirable, while this Union, in particular, was abhorrent. Division within the Church was said to be not only a God-given right, but in itself a beneficent thing.

It was a counsel of fear, but it drew many adherents. The faces of these leaders were turned to the past; the desperate needs of a new Canada were ignored or flouted. The religious future of the country was beclouded, while a *laissez faire* policy remained unchecked in their ranks, or was openly espoused as the ideal for the Presbyterian Church in Canada. The more moderate held that the Presbyterian Church was the finest instrument that God had yet made for bringing in the Kingdom of God, and any sacrifice, not so much of principle as of prestige and convenience, was too great a price to pay for division and a doubtful gain. Men who had often spoken hitherto of the Church's unhappy divisions, were now, by voice and pen, apologetic for denominational solidarity and competition as God's way of keeping Christianity alive.

It was at this point that a representative voluntary body of ministers and laymen, from all parts of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, made a momentous decision. Was it to be forward or backward for the Church? Union or the old competitive and disintegrating denominationalism?

There is a fairy story of three princes attempting to cross a wild untrodden land and win a prize. The eldest saw a high wall and turned back, saying it cannot be done. The second came to the barrier, and heard a voice telling him if he dashed himself against the wall he would reach the other side. Not daring to risk his bones he decided the price was too high. The youngest charged the barrier, which opened at the touch of his spear and let him through, though not unscathed, to win the prize.

It is an illustration of what actually happened in Canada.

The issue was fairly faced by this voluntary group of men. It meant division. It meant that, while the Methodist and Congregational Churches would enter the Union with practically their whole strength, the Presbyterian Church in entering must leave behind a considerable body of dissent. But the needs of a Christian Canada were paramount; the spiritual unity of these Christian bodies demanded something tangible. The Churches had waited long and prayed earnestly for the coming of a day when Christian forces would be united for the Kingdom of God, and the vast waste places of the Dominion were waiting impotently for a United Church, spiritually and financially strong enough to claim the frontiers of the country. The Voluntary Presbyterian Church Union Committee organized to prepare the Church for union, and the General Assembly of 1923, instructed its own Church Union Commitee "to take such further steps in preparation for the consummation of Union as will secure the fullest measure of spiritual benefit for an event so momentous in the religious history of this Dominion."[1]

[1]*Minutes of General Assembly.* 1923, p. 28.

The division within the Presbyterian Church was sharp, though unavoidable, without surrendering the principle of Union. The arguments used against Union were many, and sometimes not quite worthy. Temperamental incompatibility, and a score of similar arguments were advanced. But chief of all reasons was a sincere love for the Presbyterian Church as such. Among a number of the opponents of Union there was a conviction that the Presbyterian Church had and could produce no machinery to unite with any other Church on earth if such union caused a change, by one jot or tittle, of the *ipsissima verba* of the *Westminster Confession of Faith.* Indeed, a writ was issued, signed by many Anti-Union leaders, which sought to prevent the Union on these very grounds. The arguments advanced were not of equal value, and were not held by all who opposed Union, but they were all made to do duty in turn.

In vain did the Unionists point out that the Presbyterian Church in Canada had a right to alter her creed, that she could do so quite constitutionally, that in point of fact she had more than once made alterations in her standards. It was held that the *Basis of Union* of The United Church had been regularly submitted to the courts of the Church and duly passed upon, and that in doctrine the Basis of Union was not at variance with the essentials of the faith of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

The barriers of the Church's patience, maintained by long deferred hope of unanimous action, had been broken. The Presbyterian Church Union Movement Committee had counted the cost, and were convinced that a movement must move or disappear. Union was necessary, because separation had failed. In this the Committee on Church Union and the General Assembly agreed. Henceforth it was the deliberate aim of the negotiating Churches to found a Canadian Church, which, from the first, would be recognized as undertaking a provision of religious ordinances and pastoral care, co-extensive with the country, and adapted to the territorial distribution

of the population. The call of the unchurched areas of the frontier, and of the Mesopotamia of the slums, could never again be heard with indifference.

When Churches become narrowly ecclesiastical and offensively dogmatic, religion withers and decays. The Churches of this new country dared not become serene in the illusion that all was well. They were agreed on the fundamentals of the faith. Doubtless there would be room in the new Church for many and widely differing opinions. But they were confident that such varying opinions would not mean antagonism, factionalism, sectarianism or schism. The negotiating Churches, in their vision of Union, would be neither too old nor too class-bound, to attempt, at least, to understand the religious needs of the nation.

The Methodist Contribution

The fine spirit displayed by the other negotiating Churches, especially the Methodist Church, is beyond all praise. Much of the criticism of Church Union in Canada was directed against the Methodist Church. It was often wholly untrue, and as unjust as it was ungenerous. Always the apostle of experiment, revision and adaptation, the Methodist Church, true to the tradition of the first Societies, was singularly fitted to exhibit in the Canadian Union "its elasticity and its genius for endless adaptation." "Methodism believes that the form which a particular time and place evolves, as the best fitted to serve the purpose of the kingdom, is the only necessary one."[1]

Having set forward to this task of Union, the Methodist Church, with a broad charity and altogether admirable patience, maintained its ranks unbroken throughout all the negotiations, and entered The United Church without the loss of a single congregation. In closing a memorable pastoral letter to the congregations of the Methodist Church (1924), their great Superintendent was able to use these words: "Having resolved to unite,

[1] *Primitive Methodism and the New Catholicism.* Lorne Pierce. p. 13ff.

the three Churches concerned have struck their tents, and are marching onward hoping that, through further unions, at length the unity of the Church of Christ in the world will be recovered.

"Under divine leadership, as we believe, we of the Methodist persuasion have put the Kingdom of God above Methodism, believing that this great consummation is more important than the continuance of any denomination, although we cherish the highest admiration for the history of our Church, and the strongest affection for its holy institutions and ministries. Denominationalism becomes a secondary issue when the disciples of Christ centre their thought and prayer upon the Kingdom which is above all and should be in us all.

"We believe that the spirit of unity which promoted and has sustained this movement through so many years of waiting cannot be accounted for except as a divine creation. Therefore, we have formed a spiritual comradeship of men, women and children inspired to seek the accomplishment of the larger purposes of God under the guidance of His Holy Spirit. It is glorious to think that for the first time in the world three historic Christian denominations have come together, accepting the fulfilment of the unifying ideal of Jesus as a bond of union, and its propagation as a very definite task. They will go forward believing that there is abundant ground for faith that God, who in Christ Jesus, came into the world to reconcile it unto Himself, and hath given unto His followers the ministry of reconciliation, will yet reconcile His disciples one to another, so that there will be 'but one Body, and one Spirit, even as they are called in one hope of their calling: one Lord, one faith and one baptism.'

"Dear Brethren and Sisters, permit me to say that I thank God at every remembrance of you, that, in the long years of hope deferred, scarcely a note of impatience, pride or self-interest has marred the purity of your steadfast devotion to the fulfilment of a dream, which has haunted the spirit of the seers in all the Christian centuries. For this degree of Christian culture we shall

continue to offer hearty and humble thanksgiving to Almighty God on your behalf."[1]

The Congregationalists

The Congregational Churches of Canada consistently followed a policy looking toward Union from the very inception of the movement. Though not a large Church it nevertheless gave interdenominational leadership far beyond its relative strength. The sainted Hugh Pedley, one of its outstanding leaders, probably, as well as any, summed up the Congregational attitude to Union in his memorable declaration that they were not laboring to build a greater edifice for the admiration of men, but a more spacious tabernacle for the indwelling of Almighty God. That it was already a United Church is indicated by the Union of the Congregational Churches of Canada with the United Brethren in Christ in 1907.

Congregational Churches are individually complete in themselves, but for mutual encouragement, advice and counsel they form themselves into various unions, and had already, in 1907, but one Congregational Union of Canada. This Congregational Union of Canada received a mandate from the individual Congregational Churches of Canada, to effect a Union with the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches. In the name of the Congregational Churches of Canada, with some half-dozen exceptions, it was empowered to sign the articles of Union, which made almost all the Congregational Churches of this country a part of The United Church of Canada.

Legislation

It had been the policy of Canadian Churches, in proceeding towards Union, to secure necessary legislation which would care for the merging of property interests before the Union actually took place. Accordingly legislation was sought, which would incorporate The United Church of Canada, and which would declare in terms of

[1]*Church Union*—A New Year's Message from the General Superintendent, S. D. Chown, D.D., LL.D., January 1st, 1924.

the Preamble that the three uniting Churches, believing the promotion of Christian unity to be in accordance with the Divine Will, had recognized the obligation to seek and promote union with other Churches adhering to the same fundamental principles of the Christian faith, and that, having the right to unite with one another without loss of their identity, they had adopted a *Basis of Union.*

The legislation passed by the Federal Parliament declared this Union to be valid, and that the Churches so uniting would be constituted a body corporate and politic under the name of "The United Church of Canada." The congregations of the three negotiating Churches (other than those congregations which non-concurred), were declared to be congregations of The United Church of Canada. The legislation affirms that the Union had been formed by the Churches of their own free and independent action through their governing bodies, and in accordance with their respective constitutions; that the Act had been passed at the request of the said Churches in order to incorporate The United Church, and to make necessary provision with respect to the property; finally that the Act in no sense could be deemed to limit the independent and exclusive right and power of The United Church to legislate in all matters concerning its doctrine, worship, discipline and government, including the right and power from time to time to frame, adopt, alter, change, add to or modify its laws, subordinate standards and formulas and to determine and declare such laws, standards and formulas, subject to the conditions and safeguards contained in the *Basis of Union,* which had been prepared and adopted by these Churches. It further declared the right of The United Church to unite with any other Church or religious denomination without loss of its identity, so long as it may find such Union to be consistent with the doctrines and religious standards set forth in the *Basis of Union* of The United Church.

A clause was inserted, in the dying hours of Parliament by the Senate of Canada, that any congregation which decided to take a vote with a view to remaining out of Union, should not only vote by ballot, but that the

voting must be extended over a period of at least two weeks. This clause was not only permissive, but as it turned out, became a strong invitation to dissent, as the whole Church did not vote at the same time. The agitation, incident to this action, within the congregations of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, led to serious disruption. As a result, the activity of the Presbyterian Church Association was in a large measure responsible for the majority of the 784 Presbyterian non-concurring congregations, which, out of a total of 4,512 congregations within the Presbyterian Church in Canada, remained out of The United Church.

The general plan of the legislation was very fair, giving the right to non-concurrents to keep their own local property on a majority vote of the congregation, and also to participate in their full share of the general property of the Church as decided by a Commission. The latter provision was the most generous ever provided in Canada in any legislation involving the property of uniting Churches. In 1875, when the Presbyterian Church in Canada was formed, legislation, previously secured, provided for non-concurrents taking their local church property with them, but made no provision for any share of the general property of the Presbyterian Churches entering the Union. When the Methodist Churches secured legislation prior to their Union in 1884, no provision was made for non-concurrents whatever; not even for a non-concurring congregation to take with it its local church property, if it decided to remain out of Union.

At the suggestion of the Unionists provision was made that congregations should be allowed to vote out of The United Church during a period of six months *before* the Consummation of Union, to take away the last suggestion of "coercing anti-unionists into a Church against their will."[1]

On the further suggestion of Unionists the very first draft of the legislation provided for a Dominion Commis-

[1]Adapted from an article in the *United Church Record*. By Rev. W. T. Gunn, D.D., May, 1926.

sion of nine—three representing The United Church, three representing the congregations of the non-concurrents and three others to be chosen by the six, or, in the event of disagreement, by the Chief Justice of the Dominion of Canada, and all to be agreed to and appointed by him. No Commission could be fairer, and as a matter of fact the Dominion Commission's findings were generally agreed to by all parties concerned, the Chairman, the Hon. Mr. Justice Duff, of the Supreme Court of Canada, being especially thanked for his fairness and good offices.

By the award of the Dominion Commission the Trustees for the non-concurring congregations received 22.04 per cent. of the total assets of the Pensions Funds of the Presbyterian Church in Canada; two colleges, representing almost fifty per cent. of the college assets; about 23.3 per cent. of the Home Mission properties and assets, and about 25 per cent. of the Foreign Mission properties. That is to say: out of assets totalling approximately ten and a half million dollars the non-concurrents received upwards of 3,250,000, or about thirty-one per cent. of the whole. This corresponds generally with the proportion of the membership of the Presbyterian Church in Canada which did not see fit to enter the United Church.

While this defection made the Union of the Churches in Canada less complete and effective than was desired, none the less the consummation of Union on June 10, 1925, was an act, both in temper and outlook, the most significant which has taken place in the Christian Church since the time of the Reformation.

The visible unity of the body of Christ is a high and worthy ideal. The hope of a Canadian Church, articulating the common faith of our fathers, bringing to the people of the land an ever richer experience as the spirit of Christ gives us to see it, carrying its share of the world burden, and pledged to the establishment of a Christian Church in the centre of every needy community in Canada, constitutes a vision and a task worthy of the best effort and the supreme consecration of every member of The United Church.

IV.—THE GREAT CONSUMMATION

Not within the memory of any one present at the Inaugural Service of The United Church of Canada, had such a thing taken place before. Its uniqueness, its splendid daring, its triumphant certainty, its reaffirmation of unfaltering loyalty to a great ideal, have been unparalleled since the Reformation. Other Church Unions may have been larger, there have been none, in the history of the Christian Church, through which there ran a more conscious thrill of the Presence and benediction of Almighty God.

The tenth of June broke with all the glory of a summer day—clear sky, clear air, clear sunshine. Just as at Nicaea, the General Council met in an arena. Two texts alone relieved the barrenness of the grey walls: "He shall have dominion from sea to sea." "That they all may be one." Yet without the usual accessories of worship—without the vaulted ceilings, stained windows, gorgeous aisles and nave, or massive organ of a cathedral, but with bleakness surpassing that of a Puritan Meeting House, there was present, to a marked and unusual degree, reverence, dignity and a spirit of worship in an atmosphere charged with hope and faith and joy.

The ceremonial aspects were sublime, even the simple processional, in silence, of the uniting groups surpassed the pageant of courts. The endless rows of faces, melting into the shadows, and the overwhelming consciousness of the presence of Christ, will never leave those who were there.

Not Nicaea, but Pentecost, was the only precedent for that great gathering of Christian souls. Here was a new thing upon the earth. For the first time since Pentecost great Churches, of differing historical source, of alien traditions, of varying names, had agreed to magnify their common loyalty to the Living God, to accentuate the things that unite, to sink their distinctive differences, to adjust their opposing creeds, to lay aside denominational names, hoary with age, in order that "they all might be one—that the world might believe."

The scene at the opening services was moving beyond the power of pen to describe. When the delegates entered the arena singing the processional hymn, "The Church's One Foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord," when nearly ten thousand souls united in the highest act of Christian worship, the celebration of the Holy Communion—not for Methodists, or Presbyterians, or Congregationalists, as such, but for all—without ecclesiastical distinction or merit; when the *Te Deum* broke forth, "We Praise Thee, O God, We Acknowledge Thee to be the Lord," strong men were moved to tears, and with Pentecostal power men realized the Church of God, with one accord, in one place and with one purpose—"that the world might believe."

Other men labored—The United Church this day entered into their labors. It was as if the vast assemblage were attended by a great cloud of witnesses, "who in the calm eternities must have realized long since how trivial is so much that has divided, how sovereign so much that unites."

V.—THE TASK OF THE UNITED CHURCH

(A) The Home Mission Problem—Anglo-Saxon

It is not surprising that a union of the Churches should first show itself in a new release of spiritual power, and in a very great anxiety for the unchurched areas of this new land. With commendable enterprise The United Church set itself to this task. Since the consummation of Union three hundred and seventy-five Home Mission fields have been taken off the list of aid-receiving charges, having reached the status of self-support. In the same period a total of two hundred and eighty-five new fields have been added to the list. That is to say that two hundred and eighty-five new fields, with an average of between three and four preaching places in each, previously neglected by competing churches, are now receiving the ordinances of religion. The United Church of Canada has, therefore, occupied new home mission territory since the consummation of Union at upwards of eight hundred points in

Canada. The most of these are, naturally, English-speaking communities.

In the newer parts of Canada the Home Mission Board is at this moment responsible for work in 1,571 charges and mission fields, distributed as follows: in Saskatchewan with 277 fields; Alberta with 235; the Maritime Provinces with 200; Newfoundland with 71; Ontario and Quebec with 475; Manitoba with 156; and British Columbia with 158. The number of congregations supplied with ordinances through Home Mission agencies has now reached a total of 4,368. While The United Church is still far behind the actual religious needs of the country as a whole, it is at least facing in all seriousness the problem of the unchurched areas. Work among Anglo-Saxons is carried on in one thousand three hundred and eleven mission fields, among New Canadians in one hundred fields, among the French in twenty-five fields. There are six port chaplains employed, and including the work done by the Woman's Missionary Society, there are twenty-six hospitals maintained by The United Church of Canada, in the newer and backward areas of the country.

Five hundred and sixty congregations have been amalgamated into just half that number to make strong, self-supporting charges, and overlapping has been almost wholly eliminated. It is safe to say that within the next two or three years, the competition once existing among the Churches, which now form The United Church of Canada, will have been obliterated.

The Home Mission work of The United Church has been greatly strengthened each year by the employment of student missionaries in new and pioneer fields. In Home Mission work three hundred and fifty-six have been employed this year. Their work is exacting. The scattered areas which they cover are needy, and often wholly neglected. They are the circuit riders of this new day, and their contribution to Canadian Church life is very great. They go into unorganized areas, search out the lonely and neglected settlers, and gather them into settlers' shacks, school-houses, or wherever a meeting can be arranged. They combine the strength and zeal of youth

with the passion of the missionary. These college students employ their summer vacation in this frontier Christian work. For them, rest is to be found in adventure. Their minds demand the majesty and mystery of the hills and plains, not less than the human elements which meet them at every turn of the road. They are to be admired for their very daring.

(B) The New Canadian

The New Canadian presents a challenge to all the Churches of Canada. Up to the present the challenge has been difficult of acceptance. For one thing, there are sixty-eight languages now spoken in Canada. The policy of the Canadian Government at the beginning of this century made possible the settlement of new peoples in solid blocks. These new settlers brought with them their languages and customs. While many German, Finnish, Scandinavian and other North-Western European settlers came to Canada and brought with them the culture, cleanliness and religion of their home lands, the larger numbers came from Eastern, Central and Southern Europe. Not all of these have reached Canadian standards in living. These peasants had an innate love for the soil. Often they accepted the less attractive portions of the country, and through sheer hard work have turned many areas into veritable gardens. They have a great capacity for toil, and are thrifty in a sense rarely known in Canadian life. Illiterate, and, in most cases, with an abysmal ignorance of our Canadian traditions, our language, and our national hopes, they present a formidable task. In some foreign areas, even after the lapse of years, investigators find no nurse, doctor, Protestant church, or telephone, and none of the co-operative agencies which have helped to bind the farmers of the prairie in an offensive and defensive economic alliance. Among some of these peoples, women were formerly looked upon almost as chattels, and the sanctity of womanhood, which has been one of the distinctive characteristics of Canadian life at its best for centuries, was almost wholly absent.

The presence in a new country of such a large body of unassimilated people, with low standards of sanitation and literacy, and, in some regards, an almost pagan conscience, constitutes for the Churches not only a difficult problem, but also a unique opportunity. These immigrants are New Canadians. The adults among them are not likely to change their customs, habits, or language, but the young are eager to change all these things. They bring with them a capacity for toil, a passion for land, and yet more land, an intense hatred of war, and, among the best of them, a contribution to art, music and literature. What will the Church do with them?

It will not do to leave them alone or the destiny of Canada will be threatened by a flamboyant paganism. It will not do to patronize them. It will be best for them to make their own contribution to Canada without any interference which would stifle initiative. They cannot be made into Anglo-Saxons, but they can, through contact with the Canadian people, be made into good Canadians, and Anglo-Saxon ideals and institutions can be interpreted to them and enriched by them. Canada must build upon an understanding and sympathetic trust of these people. It requires at least a generation before they can become, in any real sense, informed Canadian citizens, and yet, through them the new national character of Canada will be ultimately enriched by quotas of experience and social inheritance from vastly different sources.

New Canadian Contribution

The exchange of offerings which many nations will contribute, the new social order which will undoubtedly emerge, even in spite of a definite curriculum looking to that end, are forces making for national solidarity. The Canada of the future will be a better Canada if there is the fullest exchange of the cultural qualities in art, music, literature and those indefinable ingredients which go to make the soul of a nation.

The Central European immigrant has not been always treated fairly in Canada. Sometimes he has been

robbed by the land shark, by predatory grain dealers and implement agents, by the unscrupulous politician who has made a tool of him, sometimes also by the merchant, even by the doctor and the lawyer, and this exploitation has aroused in him a feeling of suspicion, distrust and even vindictiveness.

In the first ten years of this century nearly half a million of these new immigrants came to Canada. In the next ten years over four hundred thousand, and the present immigration into the Dominion of Canada of the non-English-speaking, is greater than that of Anglo-Saxon newcomers.

What contribution has the Church to make to this vast influx of New Canadians? Until within the last year or two comparatively little. It does not seem quite fair, for example, that in Saskatchewan, where the population is about equally divided between English-speaking and foreign born, that, for the English-speaking there are four hundred ministers of The United Church, and only sixteen for the New Canadian. It does not seem like an adequate provision that, with almost two million non-Anglo-Saxons (other than French), in the Dominion, The United Church is so heavily encumbered by her Anglo-Saxon Home Mission work that she can spare less than twenty per cent. of her Home Mission appropriations for a work so important from the point of view of the future of Canada. Obviously these New Canadians have not received the attention that in justice they ought to have received. The United Church of Canada will not have done its best until it has given to all of them the Gospel, and so fulfilled the real work of a noble and enduring Church.

Worthy ideals of Canadian national life, commercial integrity, social welfare, mutual confidence, all have one great root, the Gospel of the Lord Jesus. The real strength of the Church is evidenced in the constant spiritual pressure it brings to bear upon the community. Her power is in religious influences, radiating through the channels of the Christian community's activity to serve the vacant and neglected spaces. Self-investment in the

people's higher life is the distinctive principle of Christianity. The task of ministering to the foreign born is extremely difficult, for it requires not only the training of special workers, but also a large number of ministers with a peculiar aptitude for foreign languages, and a knowledge of at least half a dozen of those spoken in Northern and Central Europe.

Considerable contribution to a solution of the problem has been made in the larger centres, through the maintenance of "All Nations' Churches." These churches become social and religious centres in which, through a varied programme, the newcomer relates himself both to the Church and to the country. Hospitals in isolated areas, as well as medical and dental clinics in the larger centres, have been of untold value both to the health and morals of the newcomer. The publication of newspapers, in many different languages, has helped to link the New Canadian with his past, and, on the other hand, with his outlook in a new country. Agricultural Societies, Home Makers' Clubs, the maintenance of School Homes, and the encouragement given the New Canadian to go forward to secondary school and university education, are all bearing good fruit. That these people are not slow to take advantage of such opportunities is evident from the fact that, in the Provincial University of Alberta, the largest single racial student group is Russian. The Governor-General's Gold Medal for the highest standing in a second-class teachers' examination of the Province of Saskatchewan was won by a Russian girl. In the University of Saskatchewan very creditable oil paintings by Doukhobor artists hang on the walls. One of the outstanding boy leaders in Canada is of non-Anglo-Saxon parentage, and, before the city Rotary Club, chose as his subject, "The Contribution Which the Church is Making to the New Canadians." In the Federal Parliament the Ukrainians have already one member; in the Manitoba Legislature there have been at least three Icelandic members.

Among authors might be mentioned, Laura Goodman Salverson, author of *Viking Heart,* and *Lord of the Silver Dragon,* who is of Scandinavian extraction. Frederick

Philip Grove, a Norwegian, for twenty-five years school teacher in Manitoba, is one of our finest artists in prose. Two volumes of fine essays and three novels are from his pen. A Norwegian school teacher in Manitoba, Martha Ostenso, was awarded a $12,000 prize in New York for her novel *Wild Geese.* In the University of Saskatchewan no less than seventeen Continental European races were enrolled in a single year. A newspaper reports that, in the Boys' Parliament of Saskatchewan, a sixteen-year-old boy of Doukhobor parentage, by his concern for the deeper things which undergirdle boys' work, presented a living proof of the possibilities of religious work among the younger generation of New Canadians. Another Doukhobor boy, who passed through a prairie High School, studied law so enthusiastically that he won the Provincial Gold Medal. At least one Rhodes Scholar is of Jewish, and another, now a member of the Federal Parliament, is of Icelandic extraction. Instances might be multiplied.

International Friendship

Experiments in international friendship have been fostered in some university centres by the immigration department of the Woman's Missionary Society. The women argued in this fashion. If the Trades Unions and International Brotherhoods can assimilate the ends of the earth for mutual benefit and protection, why cannot the Christian Churches enlist, not only the general public, in international friendship, but especially university people in college centres, in a real fellowship of international good will. The gains to all countries would be considerable, and at this time, when Canada is receiving more than half her immigration from without the Empire, the advantage to her would be enormous.[1]

At one of these gatherings seventy persons were present, representing sixty universities in fifteen different countries and seven of the nine Provinces of Canada.

[1]Some Canadian Universities have Societies for International Friendship and Foreign Relations, studying and promoting good will and understanding among the nations.

Some of the countries represented were, Japan, China, India, Egypt, Syria, Armenia, Roumania, Czecho-Slovakia, Poland, Germany, Sweden, Austria, Switzerland, Brazil and the United States, with a good sprinkling of English, Scottish and Irish, who had recently come to make their homes in Canada. All were required to state, first in their native tongue and then in English, their names and the countries from which they had come. One Scottish lady was invited to sing. A volunteer pianist was called for—a Swiss lady played her accompaniment. Men were there, graduates of European Universities, who were proficient in seven, and fairly proficient in twelve languages, embarrassed only in English, and one may predict only for a relatively short time.

In one of the All Peoples' Missions it would be quite easy to find on Sunday a Scandinavian, Bulgarian, Ukrainian, Hungarian and Finnish service, with a Sunday School in each language, and a concluding service each Sunday evening, for all nations, in English. In a generation all will understand the service in English better than in their native tongue. In these "All Nations' Churches" there are any number of clubs and societies taking up studies in English, Canadian Government—Civic, Provincial and Federal—gynasium classes, social entertainments, folk dances, sewing classes, choral societies, kindergarten work, athletic leagues, dramatics and what not. A Superintendent reports that twenty-five Sunday-school teachers of non-Anglo-Saxon parentage were trained in a single mission, and another that eight Ukrainians, who had grown up under this influence, had definitely pledged themselves to missionary endeavor among their own people as ministers, doctors or teachers.

Behind all statistics are the spiritual forces released by this movement toward Union, and these are doing the work of God in ways which no records can ever tabulate. When the idea of a neighborhood becomes firmly implanted in a Christian community, the foreigners have been given neighborly treatment, and they have never failed to respond. When they have been treated like out-

casts they have quite naturally returned only suspicion and distrust.

The United Church seeks to build her work for the foreign-born upon understanding, sympathy, and mutual trust, and she believes that time, in the making of a nation, is a cardinal factor for solidarity and unity.

VI.—THE SOCIAL ORDER

It is not without significance that The United Church of Canada is welcomed as a member of Pan-Presbyterianism, Ecumenical Methodism and World-Wide Congregationalism. This recognition is in line with the restored ecumenical sense in the twentieth century, of the essential unity of Protestant Churches throughout the world, which the extreme nationalism of the nineteenth century had all but lost. It is the guarantee of the Churches, one to another, of their intelligent obligation for mutual assistance and understanding. In its earlier history, Protestantism took the form of separated national Churches —then of numberless separations within each country. It begins to look as if halting steps toward reunion had already been taken, and that this century may see United Churches in the stronger Protestant countries of the world. The Union of Presbyterian Churches in Scotland will be accomplished in 1929; that of Methodist Churches in England in 1931. Committees of negotiating Churches are making preliminary surveys in the United States, and in some cases partial Unions are already in sight. The United Church of China, The United Church of North India, and The United Church of South India, The United Church of Canada, and the world movements toward reunion culminating in the Jerusalem Missionary Council, all point in the direction of some form of Protestant reunion. When that time comes, the impact of the religious conscience of the Church will be felt in the social order. Denominational social service is at best half a gesture of good will, half an ideal suspended in mid air. Man steps into a social inheritance, to which each genera-

tion adds its own contribution of good or evil, and at least part of our present social consciousness has come to us from the Church without the Church. Christianity is essentially social. We cannot have common worship even, without at least "two or three." Spiritual religion will ever seek to proclaim a social Gospel, and only a United Church will provide an adequate vehicle through which it can function for the Kingdom of God.

"In religion it has long been a recognized truth that spiritual values are to be found in human fellowship; that comradeship constitutes one of the essential aspects of the religious life. It is evident that human fellowship develops faith, loyalty, service and sacrifice—some of the greatest qualities of religion. It is also plain that the wider the association, the more worth and content do these qualities acquire. The wider the bond of man's fellowship, the deeper it usually cuts into his life. The fullest expression of this aspect of religion is in the term "the brotherhood of man," without any limitation, which carries with it a certain concept of God. The phrase the "Brotherhood of Man and the Fatherhood of God" is one and indivisible connoting two aspects of one reality; and "what God hath joined together let no man put asunder." This phrase expresses the biggest idea which the human mind can get hold of, the greatest ideal that the human spirit can strive after, the loftiest and widest fellowship of which men are capable."[1]

Religion can no longer satisfy itself by being purely individualistic. It may have been inevitable that the sixteenth century, which quite naturally expressed economic phenomena in terms of ethics and religion should give place to the nineteenth century's expression of these same economics in terms of mechanism. But one thing is certain, the philanthropy and charity of the past will no longer satisfy the Christian conscience. The Church cannot remain respectably middle class, while the vast mass of the people are demanding a social philosophy which will appreciate more of the aspects of spiritual

[1]Ward: *The New Social Order*, pp. 155, 156. The whole of Chapter VI on "Solidarity" is immensely illuminating.

idealism. It is significant that during the rise of manufacturing, and the struggle for markets in England, the middle class bourgeoisie not only held fast to the Churches, but dominated their councils. But at the same time this economic enterprise was paralleled by progressive labor movements, socialism, and kindred remedies, which, in the name of common justice, persuaded governments to go a long way in matters of child welfare, improved conditions of labor, security for old age, the rehabilitation of the handicapped, and compensation for industrial accidents. And all this transpired while the divided Churches of Christ even while supplying part of the inspiration and training some of the leadership, for the most part, remained benevolently neutral and impotent.

The Christian Church must, therefore, find some bridge between religious sentiment and moral conduct. Moreover she must articulate religious sentiment in terms of *corporate* moral conduct. The evils in society, as Bishop Gore points out, are the fruits of human blindness, wilfulness, avarice and selfishness, and the change that is needed must come, not by legislative enactments or external change, but by a fundamental renovation in the spirit and feeling of the people, and brought about chiefly through the influence and leadership of men of faith and vision. The Church must be the channel for the activity of the invisible Christ as a transforming spiritual and social influence. The moment the Church of Christ becomes amiable and superficial, and offers her former palliative philanthropy, instead of a thoroughgoing spiritual consciousness, going to the root of social, economic and spiritual ills, she will be helpless before the criticism of her foes, and must inevitably become a dying cult. What really counts in the Church's contribution to the nation's life is the strength of the spiritual impulse that forms the spearhead of any social, or moral advance. "For *their* sakes I sanctify *myself.*"

The United Church of Canada as yet, has announced no formal social programme. Her Boards are continually surveying the facts, and the Church is feeling its way to a constructive policy of advance. As an evangeli-

cal Church, in a new and rapidly-growing country, she has an opportunity of leadership denied to older Churches, where age-long customs and vested interests make the Church's social progress more difficult. The United Church of Canada believes it to be her function to leaven the people of Canada, and that part of the world for which she is responsible, with the Spirit of Christ, to train the conscience, enlighten the minds, and broaden and deepen the sympathies of those who are directly responsible for the extension and application of the principles of Christ in the affairs of the world. She believes, and labors to the end, that the Gospel of Christ which she preaches shall have such content as will extend the principles of brotherhood in every department of life.

She is under no illusion as to the difficulty of her task; but she is sure that, on great moral issues affecting the day of rest, the manufacture and sale of noxious drugs and liquors, the full implications of Christian brotherhood in respect to industry and commerce, the outlawry of war, and kindred issues, she must give clear and unequivocal leadership if she is to save the two most visible products of the Divine Spirit, the nation and the Church: the workshop and the shrine of the soul of man. The United Church was an adventure of faith. It is also a discovery of fellowship. But it is more. It is a great spiritual force. In the holy and sacramental task of restoring the broken unity of the Body of Christ, she is not an impregnable fortress, but an invincible host, outward bound. In her life she is brave and free. Her vital forces are not walled in by any ecclesiastical barriers, constructed to shut out her foes. To her, Christianity is a great assurance and, therefore, must be a great adventure. She has reason to be afraid only of herself, lest she lose her holy vision, harden into a smug and complacent denomination, and become content to take care only of her own welfare.[1] She may adapt the words of a great Florentine, who, being asked by a French foreign king to sign a humiliating and dishonorable treaty, in

[1]See Moderator's Sermon. 1926.—Rev. G. C. Pidgeon, D.D *New Outlook*. June 16, 1926.

the name of the people of Florence, tore the document to pieces. The French king, in anger, said, "Then I shall order my trumpets to sound." To which Piero Cappini, speaking with the voice of a free city, said, "If you sound your trumpets we shall ring our bells." The United Church of Canada believes that there is strength and safety in truth. She believes that the Spirit of her risen and reigning Lord led her to this Union, and under the guidance of His Spirit she can "greet the unseen with a cheer."

VII.—SOME FORWARD STEPS

Ministerial Supply

That denominational lines are being slowly but surely obliterated within The United Church herself is evident from recent reports from secretaries of Presbyteries. One western secretary reports that he does not even know the former denominational affiliations of his fellow-members of Presbytery. The almost universal testimony of the Presbyteries is that there is a fine loyalty, a deep and delightful fellowship in the ministry of The United Church.

From very incomplete returns, representing only sixty per cent. of the Presbyteries, one gathers that one hundred and fifty-three ministers have been called, or appointed, during the year 1928 to churches of other than their own former denominational affiliations. The exchange has been general in all parts of the Church. In some Presbyteries, the preponderance is in favor of one denomination, in another quite the reverse. For example, in Pictou Presbytery, Nova Scotia, which was formerly almost wholly Presbyterian, four erstwhile Methodist ministers have been settled in outstanding charges formerly Presbyterian. In Montreal Presbytery four Methodists are in Presbyterian churches, and two Presbyterians in Methodist churches. On the other hand, in the Toronto East Presbytery, according to the secretary, five Presbyterian ministers and one Congregational

minister are now in former Methodist churches, while no Methodist or Congregationalist has been called to a Presbyterian church.

The case for Western Canada may be summed up in the words of a secretary of Presbytery: "Old affiliations are forgotten, local exchanges are frequent and cordial, and in settlement, the man and the charge are considered, rather than the traditions of the past. Nine charges out of thirty-five have inducted ministers from a former denomination other than that of the charge they now serve."

Again, at the time of Union in the central Conferences, former Methodist charges received increases in membership of nearly twenty thousand Presbyterians, unionist minorities who, in obedience to their convictions, followed their Church into Union. This made available physical resources by which nearly a hundred and fifty former Methodist charges reduced mortgages, installed new organs, redecorated churches, and increased, in many cases very substantially, the salary of the former Methodist minister. Of sixteen reductions in the secretarial staff of the Church since Union, through death, resignation and retirement, six have been Methodists, and the remainder Presbyterians. The two former Congregational officers now hold positions in The United Church. Of new appointments made since Union, one secretary and one associate-secretary are former Methodists, and an assistant editor is a Presbyterian.

Amalgamations

Amalgamations, rearrangement of fields, and union of charges have been affected since June, 1925, to the number of five hundred and sixty, and this work is now fairly well completed. The saving to Home Mission funds has been considerable. One Presbytery (Kamloops, B.C.) reports a net saving of $2,750 a year, while all Presbyteries show a vastly increased efficiency in carrying on this work. "In Grande Prairie Presbytery grants have been reduced. For example, in 1925, Wembley received $1,600; in 1928, $625. In 1925 Grande Prairie received

$750. To-day this charge pays $2,000 stipend, requires no grant, and has built a $9,000 church. All this is greatly due to the Union spirit." In the Maritime Provinces alone this regrouping and amalgamation of charges has effected an annual saving to Home Mission funds of $11,000.

The work of erecting new churches and manses goes on with vigor, especially in the newer parts of the country. In the Presbyteries reporting, a hundred and thirty-eight new churches and manses have been either started or completed during the past year. Of these, seventy-eight are in the four western provinces in the great Home Mission areas, and eighteen of the others in the newer parts of the East.

Consolidation

Consolidation of departments is now complete. Twenty-six Boards and Committees of the three former Churches have been merged into six Boards; three Church papers into one, *The New Outlook;* three missionary papers into one, *The United Church Record and Missionary Review;* three Woman's Missionary papers into one, *The Missionary Monthly.* All the publishing interests of the three Churches have been united under one Board of Publications which issues twenty-eight publications and lesson helps for Sunday School and Young People. The combined circulation of publications issued by the Publishing House is in excess of eight hundred and fifty thousand per year. The plant and equipment of the Publishing House, partly used for our Church offices, are valued at more than two and a half million dollars and the annual turnover is in excess of one and a quarter million. Under the co-operative budget in a unified plan of finance the Missionary and Maintenance Fund makes a united appeal to the whole Church for the entire amount required by the various Church Boards. The annual budget and its distribution is determined by the executive of the General Council and amounts to $3,400,000 a year.

The Home Mission Board is responsible for preaching the Gospel in twenty-five languages in Canada, and main-

tains more than seventeen hundred missionaries who occupy four thousand three hundred and sixty-eight preaching places in Home Mission areas. The Board, in co-operation with the Woman's Missionary Society, has under its care forty neighborhood and community houses, nineteen school homes, seventy day schools, twenty-six hospitals and seven dispensaries and clinics.

The Foreign Mission Board has established contacts with the major races of the non-Christian world. Work is being done by United Church missionaries in Japan, Formosa, Korea, Manchuria, North China, South China, West China, Central India, Angola West Africa, and Trinidad. Including the co-operative work of the Woman's Missionary Society, there are 655 missionaries on the staff, with 2,328 native helpers, 324 native churches, 3 universities, 6 colleges, 53 hospitals and dispensaries, and 26 native doctors and nurses. The sun never sets on the work of The United Church missionaries at home and abroad.

The Woman's Missionary Society carries on medical, educational and evangelistic work in seven foreign fields, and in a large number of community and educational missions in Canada. There are 2,825 auxiliaries, with 2,877 affiliated societies. The membership is approximately 200,000; the staff abroad is 225, in the Home Field 175, and the annual budget amounts to one and a quarter million dollars. *The Missionary Monthly,* the organ of the Woman's Missionary Society, has a circulation of 65,000.

In the field of Religious Education, the Union of the Churches has shown the most gratifying results. In addition to the general Sunday-school work, during the past year alone, 8,124 certificates to students in leadership training have been issued. These certificates represent the completion of courses of study and the passing of prescribed examinations. While the Churches, before Union, were carrying on this work, yet this year's figures represent four times as many certificates issued, as were granted by the three uniting Churches in any year before Union. The Board held during this year 146 vacation

schools, and also enrolled 6,935 students in week-day religious education. There are 5,873 Sunday schools—five hundred of which have been started this year in needy areas. Extensive campaigns in Temperance and World Peace Education have been carried out.

The Board of Education has the oversight of eight theological colleges at strategic centres across Canada. Four hundred and one students are preparing for the ministry. Arts work is carried on in three universities belonging to The United Church, with an enrolment of eighteen hundred. There are thirteen residential Secondary and Junior Colleges, and a training school for women. The combined staff of teachers and professors is in excess of three hundred, the total enrolment in Church schools and colleges, seven thousand. The investment in lands, buildings and endowments amounts to more than thirteen and a half million dollars.

The Board of Evangelism and Social Service is making a survey to discover the facts, and the underlying spiritual values of the social order, with a view to creating an informed public opinion, and a sustained political conscience. It attempts to leaven the people of Canada with the social implications of the Gospel, provides missioners for special services, and is making a deliberate attempt to have every minister his own evangelist. By voice and pen it wages unceasing warfare against the devastating influences of the Liquor Traffic.

The Pension Board aims at an adequate retiring allowance for ministers and provision for widows and orphans of ministers. The pension funds of the three Churches have been consolidated, and a scheme on a sound actuarial basis has been devised to bring this desired end.

The Spiritual Objective

That The United Church of Canada is a spiritual and indissoluble Union of the Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches, will be obvious to any earnest inquirer who spends even a few weeks in this country. Congregationalists, Methodists and Presbyterians *can* live under one ecclesiastical roof, and this will become

even clearer with the passing of the years; that there was no spiritual barrier to the Union has already been demonstrated. The Spirit of Christ has unified brethren of denominations which formerly held diverse and somewhat opposing doctrinal standards. There has been found no insuperable obstacle, temperamental, social, cultural, theological, or otherwise, to this Union. Difficulties have been fairly faced, most of the antagonisms have been overcome, and, in the first three years of life as a United Church, there has been no sharp division along denominational lines in the Presbytery, Conference or General Council. There has been, as yet, little advance toward a distinctive United Church consciousness; the essential unity of the membership and the magnitude of the Church's task have so far rendered this unnecessary, if not undesirable.

Adjustments incidental to Union have demanded a patient forbearance, and often a large measure of sacrifice, especially on the part of the ministers. Sacrifice has been very real, and the end will not be in sight for years to come. All the uniting Churches have been called upon to contribute a share, larger or smaller. But for the most part hardships have been cheerfully borne by ministers and people alike, and there are few indeed within The United Church of Canada who do not rejoice in the consummation of Union. With some few exceptions, the old denominational self-consciousness has completely passed out, and the longing to return to the old ways, if it appears at all, is perhaps a natural desire of the old, or a selfish desire for long-delayed preferment. On the whole, among both ministers and people, there is a fine understanding and a genuiue Christian affection. The Christian temperament, the Christian tradition, the Christian heritage of Congregationalism, Methodism and Presbyterianism in Canada have been fused and sublimated to the Christian purpose.

In the conduct of public worship The United Church of Canada has made a distinct advance within the last three years. There is a finer spirit of reverence and devotion. The order of public worship, in many parts of the

Church, has been changed with a view to enrichment of the devotional life of the people. Responsive readings have been introduced into hundreds of services, the use of the Gloria Patri and the Lord's Prayer have become more general. Choirs, where congregations have been united, are able to undertake anthems, richer in devotional content. It is not at all uncommon to hear in a rural congregation the *Te Deum,* or the *Sanctus* appropriately rendered.

"Nobler hymns, congregational participation, vestments for choir and minister, intellectually respectable prayers, a tone and attitude of worthy joy and devotion —these are some of the tokens of the upward gravity of the new Church toward the best standards of worship."[1]

The traditional love for good reading among former Presbyterians and Congregationalists found a magnificent setting ready to hand in the contribution of the Methodist Book Room, an institution with a unique and favorable history of a hundred years. It is not surprising, therefore, that there is a new "Ministry of Literature" arising in the Church since Union. Book clubs, reading circles, a new interest in good literature, in public and Sunday-school libraries, are all paving the way, not only for a well-informed ministry, but also for a reading and discriminating public within The United Church.

Since the Union it has been possible, generally, to improve both the exterior and interior of many church buildings. In the very tints of the walls, and the color of the paints, of renovated structures even, there is evidence of a growing taste. Where new churches have been erected, or extensive changes made in existing buildings, there has been an urgent demand not only for architectural efficiency, but also for such harmonious treatment as will aid the devotional spirit, and express the deepest aspirations of the Church. The cemeteries are better cared for.

[1]*Christian Century.* May 10, 1928. P. 605.

Of the three thousand, one hundred and ninety-eight charges in The United Church of Canada, already eighty-four per cent. have a session composed of elders, charged especially with the spiritual concerns of the congregation. This is significant, since a majority of the charges were originally organized as Methodist churches, and were, by the *Basis of Union,* entitled to retain their former organization and practices. Congregationalists, likewise, had no sessions before Union. Of the sixteen per cent. which have at present no session, the majority are either small charges (many of them served by student supply, and only partially organized), or strong congregations which were quite undisturbed locally by the Union of the Churches.

Charges organized since Union have a Session, a Board of Stewards, an official board—others need not have changed their organization. But it is worthy of note, that by far the larger proportion of the united churches have already reorganized in a form which will likely become the general practice of the Church.

These facts indicate that the *Basis of Union* is acceptable alike to Congregationalists, Methodists and Presbyterians. It further indicates the readiness of congregations to readjust organization. It also effectively disposes of any claim that The United Church of Canada is wholly a Methodist Church, or wholly a Presbyterian Church, or wholly a Congregational Union of Churches. The fact is, while it is at once Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational, The United Church is more than any of them:

"And I know not if, save in this, such gifts be allowed to man,
That out of three sounds he frame, not a fourth sound, but a star."

A Worthy Ideal

A Church which enfolds more than two and a half million adherents in Canada, and has fraternal fellowship with nearly a hundred million Christians throughout the world, is so manifestly a fact, in the sphere of

the spiritual, that it must not only have a place in, but also a significant meaning for, the rest of the world. It embodies an idea and an ideal. It has within it a practical mysticism, which seeks its verification always in religious experience, a mysticism in which quietism, asceticism, and pietism have no part. It possesses the quiet strength of reality in worship, and the reasoned conviction of an ordered universe where God is working his purpose out. It glories in a strong congregational independence, which in Canada spells religious democracy. These things it inherits from the past. But it has more. It has a passion for the unity of all believers, a great hunger for a visible Union with manifold diversity, which may be acceptable to Him who prayed, "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."

May it not be that this United Church, as a potent force working out in the power of the Spirit of Christ the destiny of the race, shall be accepted as a worthy prophecy of the Grace of God to a uniting and united Christian world.

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